6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

175 cratic Czar. By the time of Ivan the Terrible, the power of the in-
642 dependent landed aristocracy was suppressed, and the autocratic power rested now on a service nobility who were given lands in conditional possession depending upon their service and their loyalty to the Czar. These people therefore found themselves in a slave-like dependency upon the ruler who was likened to God, a situation that promoted political and social regimentation and fostered domineering-subservience relationships, thus intensifying the existing incompatibilities between the upper and lower strata of the Czardom.

[157] Domineering-subservience relationships are likely to breed humiliating experiences of self-abasement and feelings of wounded self-esteem which in turn might foster intense hostilities as well as compensatory ideas of grandeur. Thus in new circumstances, both self-seeking and power-orientation were reinforced in the upper strata, and manifested themselves in the oppressive rule of the nobility, in their extreme factionalism, and in their ruthless struggle for personal power and for the favors of the Czar.

[566] This trend of events, by the second part of the sixteenth century, led to establishment of serfdom and to direct interference of the service nobility and of the government in the communal and family relations of the peasantry. From this time on, the Church, the State and the landlords joined hands in strengthening the power of the Father and of the village elders and sponsoring in the peasant family and in the village community, dominance-submission relationships, absolute power and dependence, blind obedience and self-abnegation.

181 The inevitable clash of this new power-oriented social philoso-
• [579] phy with the old stateless and equalitarian values, was reflected in intense family and community tensions and in mass restlessness. Thus a weakening of power and of controls on any level—family, local, or national—opened the way to urges of destructive aggression and revolt against all the holders of power: the fathers, the village elders, the landlords, the Church and the Czar. Outbreaks of such extreme enmity were manifested in frequent communal riots, in mass vagrancy, in bloody revolutionary uprisings, and in widespread dissent from the official

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

623 626 [661] a fiction. Lacking means of physical enforcement because of the lack of a centralized political system, common action could take place only among those who voluntarily agreed. But when small bands of mounted warriors imposed their rule over the multitudes of non-warlike peasantry, the power-oriented conquerors made use of the Old-Slavonic system of unanimity for purposes of regimentation and governmentalization from above. That is, they imposed a dictated consensus by means of force else the opposition of the peasant majority would soon have deprived the ruling minority of its power.

634 [152] In this manner a number of band chieftains of nomadic origin ruled groupings of small peasant communities, in the form of manorial principalities. Each one of these local potentates, even though Slavicized in speech or born in mixed families, still exhibited extreme self-seeking characteristics and cherished personal power and aggrandizement above everything else, a tenet that had characterized his nomadic predecessors. Each, therefore, following steppe traditions, had a scheme of his own; each was interested primarily in accumulating riches for himself and his immediate family. In consequence, these local princes and their war bands constantly intrigued and fought among themselves. They also transferred their personal and factional strifes to the neighboring towns of burghers. In these squabbles and struggle for power and expansion, the feuding princes and fighting factions did not hesitate to call on the common enemies in their neighborhoods, such as the steppe marauders or the Viking pirates to come in and help them defeat their opponents.

[579] 628 [487] [177] It was in the course of such an internecine strife (*vsta rod na rod*) in Novgorod region in the middle of the ninth century that a band of Scandinavian merchant-pirates was called on to come and help one clique of native princes against the other.[18] These "Varangians" not only came in but stayed, founding later the Russian state in the Dnieper river basin, at that time the most important merchant thoroughfare in that part of the world. These Norse conquerors and state builders were soon assimilated by the natives. In the course of time a series of new principalities was formed and old factional bickerings and fratricidal warfare was renewed.[19]

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RFI Great Russia RFI

the mind of the burghers. As a result, the city folk changed their attitude and instead of haughty bearing they now "bow low" to Mikula.

Ilya of Murom, the other hero of peasant origin, is portrayed as "being crippled" for many years. Then suddenly he acquires gigantic strength from two sources: from psalm singers and from Svyatogor, a hero of supernatural origin and superhuman powers. By means of this acquired strength and by employing cunning, Ilya gets rid of Svyatogor and, like Mikula, joins the bandit-warriors. However, the professional warriors do not accept Ilya on equal terms because of his low origin. But by constant demonstration of superior physical strength employed as a means of intimidation Ilya is finally accepted by the ruling military aristocracy. After a terrifying demonstration of physical strength which shook the whole town to its foundation Prince Vladimir became so panicky that he hurried a messenger to humbly invite Ilya to a prince's feast:

> Knock upon the door five times
> Then cross yourself in the prescribed manner
> Make your bow as it is enjoined,
> Offer humble salutations, and beat with your forehead
> Upon the floor of bricks,
> Upon damp mother earth herself,
> Before the old Cossack, Ilya of Murom.[26]

It seems clear that in these two heroes of peasant origin we find reflected the vicissitudes to which the Old-Slavonic society has been exposed after it has been subjugated to warriors and traders. The moral and productive values of the peasants, symbolized by Mikula's strength, his skill in productiveness, his social responsibility and feelings of dignity and equality, were rapidly declining in the changing conditions. The peasants became an easy prey of the new ruling classes. The result was moral corruption on the part of the soil cultivators, disinterest in land, and an urge to revolt. The peasantry became "crippled." First they expected help from supernatural forces. Then finally they began to rely on guile and on terror to protect themselves. They realized that in the new political atmosphere it was superior physical force which was admired and respected. Many peasants

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

therefore were leaving the land to move to the cities or to join the bandits as traders and warriors.

These bandit-warriors are pictured in the Russian folk epic as ruling by such terrifying violence and dreadful terror and craft that all the living beings on the earth flee and hide, or lie prostrate, and even the earth itself shrinks and the sun sinks away at their appearance:

> The red sun was sinking
> Behind the dark woods, behind the broad sea,
> Multitudes of stars studded the clear sky
> When Lord Volga Buslavlevich was born
> In holy Russia.
> When Volga Buslavlevich was five years of age,[27]
> Lord Volga Buslavlevich went forth over the damp earth
> Damp mother earth was rent,
> The wild beasts fled away up to the clouds;
> And the fish scattered in the blue sea:
> And Lord Volga Buslavlevich went
> To learn all craft and wisdom,
> All the various languages;[28]
>
> Volga grew in strength and stature.
> He chose for himself a bold druzhina,
> Of thirty youths save one,
> He, Volga making the thirtieth.
> His dear 'uncle' bestowed upon him,
> Gracious Vladimir of Royal Kiev,
> Three cities with their peasants.[29]

The hero knights of these legendary *Byliny* (the events of the olden days) when they find themselves in circumstances which appear to be under their control, are likely to be boastful, quarrelsome, disrespectful, sensitive to rank and inclined to belittle the strength of their adversaries. In such circumstances they spend their time either in plundering, fighting, maiming and killing, or in feasting, debauchery, and drunkenness.[30]

The extreme power-compulsion and delusions of grandeur of these supermen, as well as their complete lack of self-control, are well symbolized in folk narratives about Svyatogor. This hero has an irresistible urge to bring the heaven and the earth to-

6; Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RFI Great Russia RFI

level violence was manifested in frequent beatings of wife and children, and on the rural community level in habitual drunkenness that often ended in brawls and even murder.[19] In conditions which foster human degradation and lack of trust, both self-seeking and vindictiveness flourish. Hence the Great-Russian peasant was inclined to commit atrocious acts of revenge against people whom he considered as his persecutors or who caused him any harm. When threatening with revenge the Great-Russian peasant was likely to say: "You will pay me with your own blood" (*Ty u menya kroviyu svoey umoeshsya*). Killing as a revenge, burning hay-ricks, barns and homes was a common occurrence. The peasants were likely to organize a collective hunt against real or fancied malefactors and mutilate them or put them to death by means of torture:

> For murder and robbery, death of the culprit—sometimes with mutilation by cutting and tearing off of various parts of his body. For horse-theft and grand larceny they practice sometimes hammering of iron nails into the head and forcing of wooden pins under the nails and also merciless beating even onto death; . . . in some instances the case ends by maiming the thief and letting him go.[19]

At the same time the frontiersmen and professional warriors, such as the Cossacks, became renowned and widely admired because of their deeds of vindictiveness and violence. War was a great opportunity for people with such inclinations. As Gogol has put it, the Cossacks found a great delight in "accumulating booty from raided towns, putting the villages and the fields on fire, and spreading their glories by far and wide throughout the steppe" in order "to revenge themselves for all evil and humiliation."[20] There were numerous robber and Cossack songs which told about such exploits, and expressed desire for vindictiveness and destructive aggression.

Destructive aggression was nursed on the patriarchal family level and reinforced by conditions in the local community. Thus as soon as the controls of the authorities would weaken, mass revolts would come into the open. Such a behavior in turn was used by the local authorities as a justification for their strictness in dealing with the peasants:

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RFl Great Russia RFl

Speaking of the character of the peasants Mr. Karnovitch observed, that whoever has to exercise authority over them must above all things guard against indecision, whether in word or act. The Russian always requires a definite command; and in disputes, if the settlement be distinct and pre-emptory, he will be satisfied, whether the sentence is favorable or unfavorable, wise or unwise. If there be hesitation, he immediately becomes intractable, while a resolute command has a magical influence which he cannot resist.[21]

In such a society which is kept together by naked force rather than by moral bonds, breakdown of controls easily results in revolt and upheavals, in widespread bloodshed and destruction. On such occasions, just like the raznochintsy intelligentsia, the peasants, too, tended to revolt against all forms of humiliation and oppressive submission and demanded reestablishment of the old community relations, in which truth and justice and equalitarian brotherhood of man prevailed.

Such forms of peasant protest, which were directed against all the authorities, the family, community elders, the landlord, the Church and the state, will be discussed on the following pages.

18
RELIGIOUS REVOLT OF THE PEASANTRY

I

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH which in the course of its history came to be completely subjected to the state and was made an instrument of governing, supported the lay authorities in their policies of enserfment. But the state had meagerly rewarded the Church for such services. The revenues from the land donations given to the parishes by the state or by the landlords were not sufficient to maintain the parish priests and their families. The village priests therefore depended for their living upon the fees which the peasants

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

the peasantry, and appealed to their deeply rooted hostilities against the ruling classes, and against all people of means. In their proclamations to the peasantry they stated that "the land belongs to those who till it." They incited the peasants to appropriate by force hay, pasture, and timber. They also encouraged violence and murder against all those whom they held responsible for their plight.[9]

As a result of such propaganda and agitation combined with economic and social difficulties, peasant disturbances were renewed and increased in frequency and intensity. They led to the events of 1905. That year the government suffered a considerable loss of prestige because of the defeat on the battlefield (the Japanese War of 1904–1905). In such circumstances (the same as after the Crimean War), fear and awe and unconditional obedience—the foundations of Czarist rule—were shaken, internal disturbances ensued and threatened the existence of the Czardom. By this time the revolutionary eruptions of the peasantry were combined with those of the industrial proletariat. Between January and April, 1905, there were about 660,000 workers on economic and political strikes.[10] In October of the same year there was again a general strike.

In that month also a general peasant rising took place embracing three hundred districts in 47 gubernias. Again it was the central and southern regions that took the lead;[11] and again the gubernias in which the landlords suffered the heaviest losses were predominantly those where the system of repartitional land tenure prevailed over the system of individual peasant households and of hereditary holdings. In the communities with communal land holdings the dissatisfaction was greatest and violence ran especially high.

The activities of the Social Revolutionaries in the village were joined by those of the Bolsheviks. By the beginning of the twentieth century a wing of the Russian Social Democratic Party, the Bolsheviks, who earlier scorned the peasants and worked exclusively among the urban proletariat, began to pay more attention to the Russian village. They became impressed by the frequency and the intensity of the peasants' disturbances and realized that the peasantry presented potentially very ex-

7:Lineva B-5 (no date)1893 RF1 Great Russia RF1

539

The Mustaches have met in the grogshop,
And sat down in a circle by themselves;
The biggest Mustache was the chief of them all,
Gryshka Mourishka, a nobleman's son.

And he says, stroking his mustaches:
"Brethren mine, you bold Mustaches,
"The summer is passing, the winter is near,
"And we must consider how we will feed our bellies."

"Go, boys, and grind up your axes,
"Have the blacksmith make pikes for you,
"Whet your long knives to a good edge—
"For we shall need all these weapons soon."

"I know of a man who is very rich,
"And he lives on a mountain far away;
"He does not plow, but has wheat to sell,
"And the money for it he puts in a box."

[571] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries organized bands of robbers were frequent in Russia and were a ready refuge for young men, unable to bear the petty restrictions of law and custom at home. As they also often were protectors and avengers of the poor, they were rather popular with the masses; the strain of romance in their mode of life added to the regard in which they were held. For these reasons the number of robber songs, which passed amongst the people was quite great.

Mustache was probably the nick-name of some robber chief, adorned with particularly long mustaches, and his gang may have been called after him—the Bold Mustaches.

[533] A peculiarity of the robber songs is that they are hardly ever executed as solos; many other songs are used by a single voice as well as choir, but these it is customary to render by many voices together. This fact evidently is directly connected with the essence of the subject, which they deal with, as robbers did their work also in organized bands.

This same feature is observed in the laboring songs, which are translated herein; they also must be sung by a choir, as the work must be done by a gang of men together.

7: Lineva B-5 (no date)1893 RFl Great Russia RFl

539

F. BARGEMEN'S SONG.

16. VOLGA.

Down the Volga, down our mother river,
Down the broad and long river,
A storm has arisen,
Not a little storm either.
The waves run high;
Nothing can be seen in the waves,
But a small red boat.
White shine its sails,
And black are the caps of the rowers.
The master stands at the stern,
Dressed in his best attire.

This song is a favorite one with the bargemen on the river Volga, and is also much liked all over Russia; hardly a boating party takes place without the singing of the *Volga*.

This song originated amongst the robbers who used to infest the river Volga in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they organized themselves into large bands and captured vessels; sometimes they were powerful enough to go out to sea and take and plunder large towns on the coast. [539]

The song describes the sailing of a band on the river in stormy weather; the crew is well dressed and the chief is in holiday attire. They are going down the river, and are going to carry away a young woman, who is waiting for them.

The song is quite old, several hundred years, but has been preserved in nearly the original form. The sustained boldness and freedom of the tune seem in perfect consonance with the storm on a broad and deep river.

G. LABORING SONGS.

17. HEAVE, HO!

(*Ay, oukhnem.*)

Oh, heave, ho!
Oh heave ho!